

The Cultural Legacy of West Africa

In what ways do the cultural achievements of West Africa influence our culture today?

PREVIEW

Practice reciting in unison the appropriate call or response in the first verse of the song “Everybody Ought to Know.”

“Everybody Ought to Know”

Call: Everybody ought to know

Response: Everybody ought to know

Call: Everybody ought to know

Response: Everybody ought to know

Together: Everybody ought to know

Call: What freedom is

Response: What freedom is

For verses 2–5, replace *freedom* with *justice*, *friendship*, *happiness*, and then repeat *freedom*.

After your perform the call-and-response song, answer the following questions.

1. How did it feel to sing this call-and-response song?
2. What do you think is the purpose of this song?
3. Do you think that the call-and-response tradition has influenced modern music? If so, how?

READING NOTES

Social Studies Vocabulary

As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers.

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| oral tradition | call-and-response |
| griot | terra-cotta |
| genealogy | kente |
| folktale | appliqué |

Section 1

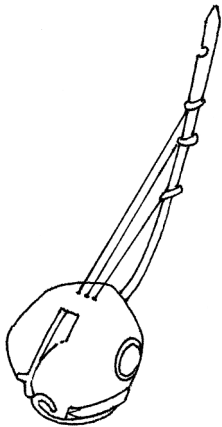
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|--|---|
| <p>1. Why has oral tradition been so important in West Africa?</p> | <p>3. How have West African folktales become a part of the culture in the Americas?</p> |
| <p>2. What are <i>griots</i>? Why were they important in West African culture?</p> | <p>4. How do West African written and oral traditions influence life today?</p> |

Section 2

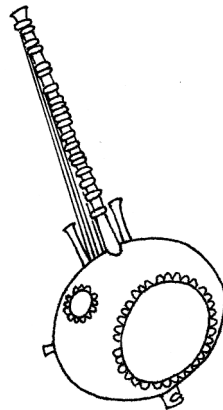
1. What functions did music serve in medieval West Africa?

2. Describe call-and-response singing.

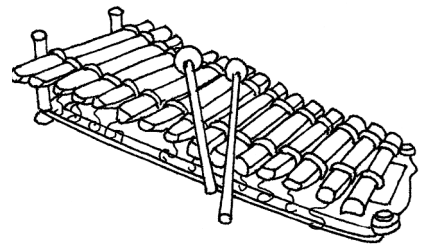
3. Label each of the following traditional West African instruments by matching their descriptions in the Student Text with the pictures.



a. _____



b. _____



c. _____

4. How does West African music and dance influence music today?

READING FURTHER

Preparing to Write: Identifying Supporting Details

Modern-day griot Youssou N'Dour tells stories in his songs that praise traditions and teach lessons. If you were a griot, what would you sing about? For example, you might sing about a yearly festival, a holiday, a family tradition, or even an annual sporting event. Choose a tradition or life lesson that matters to you. Write it in the center oval of the word web below. Then complete the web by adding supporting details that tell about this topic. Include interesting and descriptive words, and add as many items to the word web as you need.

The diagram is a word web template. It features a central circle with the text "Title: _____" inside. Four larger circles are arranged around the central one, each connected to it by a short line. The four outer circles are empty, intended for students to write supporting details.

Writing Lyrics for a Griot Song

Suppose that you are a griot, like Youssou N’Dour. Use the details you recorded in the word web to write song lyrics about your topic. Song lyrics are basically poems set to music. Your lyrics can rhyme or not, but should describe and express a point of view, make sense, and be of high interest to a listener. Write your draft in the space below. Then write a neat, final copy in ink *on a separate sheet of paper*.

Use this rubric to evaluate your song lyrics. Make changes to your lyrics if you need to.

Score	Description
3	The song lyrics are clearly relevant to the topic. They include supporting details and descriptive terms from the word web and express a point of view or lesson. There are no spelling or grammar errors.
2	The song lyrics are somewhat relevant to the topic. They include some supporting details from the word web and express a vague point of view or lesson. There are some spelling or grammar errors.
1	The song lyrics are not relevant to the topic. They include few supporting details from the word web and lack a strong point of view or lesson. There are many spelling or grammar errors.